

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES
July 13, 2006

Members Present: Barbara Sutherland, Elsie Fetterman, Susan Whitbourne, Doris Holden, Ed Kaler, Tom McAuley, Rosemary Kofler, David Yaukey (new member)

Absent: Daniel Clapp (new member)

Select Board Liaison: absent

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator), Jeanette Miller (Program Assistant)

Absent: Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services)

Guests: Marge Babb

Welcome:

Barbara Sutherland (Chair) called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Minutes of June Meeting:

There was one typo in the minutes. They were accepted as corrected.

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:

Doris reported little activity. There was some credited interest. No disbursements. The report was accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome New Members:

Nancy introduced new member David Yaukey, a volunteer for the noontime Meals on Wheels program and retired UMass professor of Sociology. Each COA member followed with a self-introduction and brief summary of personal experience. Daniel Clapp, also new member and noontime Meals on Wheels volunteer, was unable to attend the meeting.

Welcome New "Experience Works" Employee, Jeanette Miller:

Jeanette introduced herself and her background. She will be Program Assistant, working 20 hours per week.

Election of Officers:

Doris presented the slate of officers. **Chair:** Barbara Sutherland **Vice Chair:** Tom McAuley **Secretary:** Rosemary Kofler **Treasurer:** Doris Holden. The Council voted favorably to elect those nominated.

COA Representative to 250th Anniversary Committee:

The Town is planning a year-long series of events in celebration of the Town of Amherst's 250th Anniversary. Nancy requested a volunteer to represent the Council at the monthly meetings to give an opinion on the ways that Seniors can be involved in the celebration and report back to the COA on what the committee is planning. Ed Kaler volunteered to represent the COA.

Need Representative to go to Special Municipal Employees Seminar for Boards and Committees in July:

Nancy explained that the Select Board appoints some Town committees, others are appointed by the Town Manager, and they have different restrictions with respect to conflict of interest. The COA members are appointed by the Town Manager. A COA volunteer is needed to attend the meeting on restrictions and to report back to the COA, explaining what was discussed. David Yaukey volunteered.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Parking Sub-Committee:

Nancy attended a small staff meeting which included Police Captain Mike Kent, Town Collector Claire McGinnis and Town Planner Jonathan Tucker. (John Musante, Interim Town Manager, was not present.) They were sensitive to our concerns regarding reduced parking fees for elders. They asked that we present to them our best suggestion

as to how to do that and what the financial implications would be. The Town wants us to educate the seniors on who is eligible for a handicap sticker, how to get a handicap sticker, and where they can park with that sticker. Ed stated the plans to proceed: 1) to come up with a flyer explaining all the options available now for free parking 2) for staff to establish a financial criteria 3) to develop a confidential needs survey to determine who needs services, mobility and financial need being considerations. Nancy suggested having a small amount of money available from the Senior Trust to help those volunteers who have a financial need.

Highland Valley Elder Services:

Elsie spoke of informational meetings and requests for proposals and shared the monthly packet of information she received from HVES. Nancy explained HVES to new member, David. The state is divided into regions with an Area Agency on Aging in each. Our region includes 28 towns. The needs of each town are assessed and money is appropriated according to services needed. Robert Gallant is the Director of HVES. His goal is to promote a “caring community” by developing a database to match needs with offers, a type of trading or bartering of services among people. Amherst is considered a model in the Highland Valley region because our meal delivery drivers don’t get paid – they volunteer their time.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Marlene’s Hours:

Nancy reported that Marlene’s hours were reduced to four days per week. Marlene has strengths in developing systems, in developing programs for seniors and in computers.

Friends Update:

Nancy reviewed the history of the Senior Trust and the fact that we now know that it is illegal for the members of the COA to also be trustees of the Trust. Public employees cannot handle private money – thus the proposal to form the Friends Group. The Town Council liked our draft. It needs to be filed and approved by the Attorney General. Once that is done we can begin fundraising again.

Retreat:

Nancy announced that the COA Retreat will be held October 19th, from 9 AM to 1 PM. It will include our regular business meeting and lunch. Professor Shewe and Susan Whitbourne will run the retreat. A Comprehensive Planning Committee member will be invited since the Master Plan for Amherst is to include public participation. Nancy feels it is critical that COA members appreciate the demographics and think ahead to planning services for seniors as the Town ages and the percent of elderly increases. Members should think about what our focus and needs will be. Do we want to strengthen our wellness programs? Do we need a dedicated space for more fitness activities? Do we want to institute an adult social day program? What other ideas should we consider to meet the needs of the influx of Baby Boomers?

COA STAFF REPORTS

Annual Reports:

Nancy said that the annual reports for the Department of Elder Affairs and the Town of Amherst are currently being prepared. The Department of Elder Affairs Annual Report is due August 7th and the annual report for the Town of Amherst is due September 1st. There are piles of statistics, and since the system is not computerized but done manually, it takes a lot of time.

International Transportation Network:

Nancy explained this national program in the state in which a person who is no longer able to drive will donate his/her car and bank credit for rides to appointments, etc. Jane Diamond and others are trying to do a feasibility study to determine if such a transportation network could be implemented in our region, since there are concerns that due to level funding the PVTa van may not be able to maintain services to non-ADA riders in the face of rising costs.

ID Camera:

Nancy reported that our old ID camera is now broken. Elders find the identification card useful and valuable. The IT Department informed us that we could buy a digital camera and produce ID cards on the computer.

UMass Speech and Hearing Center Partnership:

Nancy explained that the partnership would include 1) hearing screening 2) support groups and 3) seminars.

Nancy spoke of the decreased supply of Farmers Market coupons available this year to low-income residents. Last year Amherst was entitled to only 10 coupons. HVES supplies the coupons and now they are on a first come first serve basis and Amherst residents must go to Northampton to obtain the coupons.

Volunteer Manual:

Marlene reported that the Amherst Senior Center has over 250 volunteers, therefore there is a need for a Volunteer Manual to explain procedures and answer questions. She and Maura are looking at manuals that other Senior Centers use. They will come up with our own version.

Other:

Elsie wondered if the Council would be sending thank you notes to the outgoing COA members. Nancy said that those members would be taken to lunch and given an exit interview about their experiences on the COA.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.

The next COA meeting will be held on September 14, 2006 at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary